

CARTER ET AL. -- 10/719,066
Client/Matter: 040046-0306195

REMARKS

Claims 1-39 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 17 and 27 are amended. Reconsideration in view of the amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants note that claims 14 and 17 were not rejected over the prior art. Applicants assume that claims 14 and 17 are allowable. Claim 17 has been rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1-6, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Mitchell et al. (U.S. Patent 6,214,037) in view of Zimmon (U.S. Patent 5,052,998).

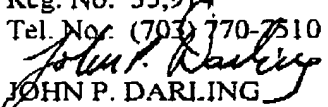
Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 7-11 define patentable subject matter. By this Amendment, independent claims 1 and 27 have been amended to recite at least one conically tapered tip portion disposed at an end of the body. As neither Mitchell et al. nor Zimmon disclose or suggest at least one conically tapered tip portion disposed at an end of the body, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 27 patentably define over the combination of Mitchell et al. and Zimmon.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-6, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 18-39 over Mitchell et al. in view of Zimmon are respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all the claims are allowable and that the entire application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed.

Respectfully submitted,
PILLSBURY WINTHROP SHAW PITTMAN LLP

JEFFREY D. KARCESKI
Reg. No: 35,914
Tel. No.: (703) 770-7510

JOHN P. DARLING
Reg. No. 44,482
Tel. No.: (703) 770-7745

Date: January 10, 2006
P.O. Box 10500
McLean, VA 22102
Tel. No.: (703) 770-7900
Fax No.: (703) 770-7901